The
COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XXXV *October* 31, 1941 NUMBER 2

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THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index* and *Catholic Bookman.*

Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York
Annual Subscription: U. S. and Canada, $5.00; Foreign, $6.00

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Report on Radio

DURING the last three years the Federal Communications Commission has held two long and exhaustive investigations on questions of general policy in the matter of the radio. The first, which ended last May 2 in the announcement of a drastic set of regulations (modified and softened, but not changed in principle, in a new set of rules announced October 11), was directed toward determining "what special regulations applicable to radio stations engaged in chain or other broadcasting are required in the public interest, convenience or necessity." The second hearings, which are presently under way and are likely to continue so for many months, are directed toward determining "what policy or rules, if any, should be promulgated in connection with operation of new high frequency (FM) broadcast stations and for future acquisitions of standard broadcast stations by newspapers." Neither investigation has received adequate treatment in the press.

Obviously the primary intent of both hearings is to determine how the Commission can best safeguard the "public interest, convenience or necessity" in the matter of the ownership (or control) of the radio, and in both cases the problem divides in two: (1) the economic aspect and (2) the aspect of "free speech." Both aspects, of course, interlock.

The economic aspect, in both instances, relates directly to the question of monopoly (or quasi-monopoly). What, briefly, is the radio situation? In May, 1941, the FCC issued its "Report on Chain Broadcasting," giving the facts and arguments behind the majority decision to announce the rules already referred to, and the minority's case in opposition to those rules. This report gives certain pertinent statistics, which are still substantially correct. There were then 4 national networks, belonging to three companies: 2 to NBC and 1 each to CBS and Mutual. Out of 660 commercial stations throughout the country, 341 were affiliated with these networks, most of them by "exclusive" contracts or by outright control (the figure at present writing is approximately 400). But—what is more important—these 341 stations constituted the most powerful and desirable in the United States; the 267 stations affiliated with CBS and NBC constituted 96.2 percent of all "clear channel" (the most powerful) stations and 100 percent of all "high power" regional stations. Indeed these two companies owned (or leased) outright almost 50 percent of all 50,000 watt stations (the most powerful category allowed by the FCC), and had as affiliates all but 2 of the rest.

Now by a strict construction it could be said that the three companies were, and are, in competition with each other for *sales*. The contention of the FCC majority was that the nature of radio—the limited number of stations possible, for physical reasons—had made this sort of competition only *one* of those necessary if monopoly is to be avoided. Each licensee, the argument ran, is responsible for using his privilege in the public interest. Yet economically, as it works out, affiliation with a network is almost indispensable.

The element of monopoly, then, lay in the sort of affiliation contract which all three chain operators—especially NBC and CBS—generally required. These contracts effectually prevented the individual station licensee from fulfilling his public *obligations* by substantially denying him the right to determine what programs his station shall—or shall not—broadcast. These contracts also effectively prevented the entrance of new networks into the field, greatly cutting down the possible competition in *programs*. This situation the FCC majority found to be monopolistic, and against public interest. The rules announced, by shortening the duration of affiliation contracts, by drastically weakening the exclusivity provisions permissible therein, by assuring the affiliated stations the right to refuse network programs, by requiring that no single company should operate more than one network, and by curtailing drastically the number of stations a network might directly control—by all these means and some others the rules sought to break up this form of monopoly.

In all this we are faced with a typical modern dilemma. The urge toward profits, toward bigness, toward effective monopoly, even if it is only local monopoly, is what has made possible the creation of a great and profitable and growing industry. In 1940, NBC and CBS together made

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some $13,000,000 profit, paid dividends on all classes of stock. In October, 1941, NBC sales are 9 percent ahead of 1940, CBS 10 percent, Mutual 57 percent. Yet by their very efficiency, by the superior quality of what they have done, these great chains have tended in a monopolistic direction. You may believe that economically this is a good and logical thing, though economists would certainly differ on that point. But as far as freedom of speech — or, to be more accurate, access to free speech—is concerned, monopoly is a desperate evil.

What the FCC so far has done is to try to break up the monopoly without destroying the profit; if it can succeed (or if Congress can succeed in case the FCC is adjudged to be exceeding its authority), a great democratic victory will have been won. If it cannot, we shall eventually be faced with the threat of the greatest and most desperate monopoly of all—government operation. Some "liberals" are already talking about a TVA for radio . . .

Background for Labor News

LABOR ITEMS have been prominently on the front pages in recent weeks — justifiably so, if often for the wrong reasons. For if some strikes have interfered with national defense, not many strikes have done so. Taken as a whole, labor is at work because labor is simply a word which stands for the working people of America and these people have to live, and have to work, and when work is obtainable, under more or less fair conditions, actually desire to work. The central point in the labor situation is that the working people of America are becoming aware of the power they possess and are faced with a double problem: they must integrate that power with the American social structure and determine to what extent and in what way that structure need be modified; they must coordinate that power on a broad democratic basis and keep it from being exercised by any minorities of selfseeking leaders, or by leaders devoted to a political or social plan which they are not prepared to accept.

It is only against this background that current strikes and current union disputes can be seen as elements in a general picture. The inter-union jurisdictional strikes—of which the most unreasonable, on the surface, has been the strike in Toledo, Ohio, in which a CIO union refused to work with material prepared in a factory where a disputed election had installed an AFL union—are incidents in the search of workers to establish orderly representation and stable organization. The defeat of the Stalinist minority in the Newspaper Guild is incidental to its search for truly democratic representation. When Mr. Browne was gently let out of the AFL, an attempt was made to free labor unions from a kind of leadership which it is unnecessary to qualify. In the difficult negotiations between the railroad workers and the companies the question relates to the power of the unions applied to protecting their members against the rising cost of living.

The elements involved in each strike are complicated and difficult to appraise. The immediate justice of each strike is impossible to establish. What we would establish here is that no strike is meaningless. Each strike is related to a general picture which is clear. We have the centralized, controlling power of the state, the broad and traditional outlines of American society, and, as a new element, the growing strength of labor, uncertain yet in policy, inchoate still in organization. In England there has been much talk recently about "revolution by consent": in this country we are seeing now the integration of organized labor into a society which, confidently, we believe supple enough and realistic enough and generous enough to seek and find the social forms necessary to a just and healthy future.

Practically, of course, everything in our time is affected by the war and practically, again, strikes anywhere in time of stress will affect national defense and will be judged by the state and by the people as doing so. Essentially, however, the problems and the hopes which the labor movement in this country provokes are unrelated to the war; they are related to a world which produces war only as one among many evils—a world which must be changed.

Mr. Hoover Speaks to Us

THOSE who have opposed the plan for the United States to feed the conquered peoples of Europe will have a hard time replying in their own consciences to Mr. Hoover's latest plea. He reviews the efforts of his committee (which represents members of every faith and political complexion) for experimental feeding in Belgium last winter—efforts rejected by the British "although safeguarded to meet their every military objection." With great restraint, he touches briefly on the "vast organized propaganda of misrepresentation" which (in addition to the "natural fears" that the nazis would seize relief supplies) "was spread over the United States and Great Britain"; misrepresentation reaching back even into the conduct of Belgian relief in the last war. Finally, in view of the altered attitude here toward the war, his committee repeats its request of last spring that the State Department now ask one of the neutral governments—Sweden, Ireland, Switzerland, Argentina—to take over and supervise the project to feed the conquered. This project calls for the sending of fats and special foods by us, the sending of breadstuffs by Germany, and the undertaking by Germany to cease removing food from the territories covered by relief opera-

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tions. The other features—local control of the plan, its provision that the food be consumed as given out, and that failure of the nazis anywhere to honor their own promises would result in the suspension of relief at that place—have already been put before our public many times.

This is the brief, impersonal outline. The force of its presentation by Mr. Hoover lies in his sense of the moral and humane values involved. The situation abroad is in every way worse than when his committee found it already desperate a year ago, and he sees that we are in real danger of uttering a refusal which must "soil our spiritual life" and fill us later with "grief and remorse." In Belgium the lack of food is "crucifying the children." Among Warsaw Jews the death rate months ago was fifteen times the normal. And he asks: "Is the Allied cause any further advanced today as a consequence of this starvation of children? Are Hitler's armies any less victorious than if those children had been saved?" We feed British woman and children, as is our duty, "gladly"; "have not the other women and children the right to life also?" He points out that the British have in fact relaxed the blockade in many instances: to send food to their men in German prisons, food which the Germans distribute honestly; to permit the Turks ("Mohammedans, not Christians") to ship food to Greece; even to pass supplies to neutral Sweden, for whose political attitude they are concerned. "By what logic or humanity can neutrals be given supplies and peoples who have fought and died in the Allied cause be discriminated against?" We repeat what we have often said here before: there is no answer to these facts and arguments except one. If we do not help these peoples now, their agony, their diseases, their death will be at our door, for we might have prevented it and did not. Let those who can, accept what this will mean, alike to the national conscience and to international good will.

Clergy Poll

THE "Catholic clergy war poll," showing 91.5 percent of Catholic priests opposing shooting war outside the hemisphere and 90.5 percent opposing aid for "the Communistic Russian government" is an imposing looking piece of evidence thrown into the debate on foreign policy. The questions indicate that the poll was conducted partisanly to score a point for non-interventionism rather than scientifically to discover the truest possible reflection of our priests' opinion. But the overwhelming percentages obtained (at this late date, when criticism of polls of opinion has made almost everyone aware of the tendentiousness of most questions asked) must be taken to show that Catholic priests do, in great majority, lean toward opposition to American entry into the war, away from the "*all* measures necessary" policy which is ever more flatly projected by the Administration. The opposition of the Catholic clergy is in the evidence—because of the character of the questions not the best of evidence, but evidence made impressive by the great majorities and even more by the surprising number of answers, over 35 percent. It is surely not notably worse than most evidence used in the war debate.

What is the moral? There doesn't seem to be any special esoteric lesson. Except for those few individuals, almost universally repudiated, who discuss the war as a holy war and religious crusade, or who consider opposition to be a similarly religious crusade, the public has right along recognized that our foreign policy lies within the realm of political statesmanship. Decisions there have to be taken on the basis of practical prudence, informed as much as possible by sound moral standards; there is no question of dogmatic certitude in the formulation of a wise course for the country in the war. Polling Catholic priests as a group is an improper exercise if it is meant to imply that the question is a religious one of "faith and morals" in which field they have special rôle, qualification and experience. The public differences between Catholic lay people, priests and bishops ought to be sufficient evidence that this field is not one where the clergy can, in the nature of things, offer unique expertness and conclusiveness. They are, however, unquestionably leaders of public opinion. A more legitimate use of the poll logically would be as a possible sampling of the whole population in the parishes. The publicity of the "Catholic Laymen's Committee for Peace" did not bring this up.

The poll naturally reassures those who oppose US entry into the war. It confirms our opinion, makes us still more confident we are not clearly or directly, if inadvertently, offending charity, and shows that opposition is not opposition to any overwhelming tide of wisdom. The Catholic opposed to total US entry into the war is given comfort; he is strengthened and made less unhappy.

The "Catholic Laymen" put the priests on the spot. They now stand on a record, vague but usable. If the passions of war continue to develop, if the US goes all in, that record will bring danger and suspicion to the Church for the duration. The hierarchy and clergy will unquestionably support the legitimate American authority in any such circumstance with a principled loyalty which will disarm all but malicious criticism. It ought not be terribly serious, but the record will give a short handle to ill will. But later, when the period of war psychology is over, that record may, roughly and crudely, serve as a witness to attract new respect and love. At least no new materialistic, revolutionary humanitarianism will be able to hint that the priests lashed the people of the United States into a new world war.—P. B.

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RECENTLY an organization called the Catholic Laymen's Committee for Peace released the results of a nationwide poll of Catholic priests' opinions on war and on aid to Russia. All of the priests in the United States, except bishops and service chaplains, were asked these two questions:

1. Do you favor the United States engaging in a shooting war outside the Western Hemisphere?
2. Are you in favor of the United States aiding the Communistic Russian government?

The questions were mailed to 34,616 priests; 13,155 of them replied. The returns were divided in this way:

	No	Yes	Not Voting
Do you favor the United States engaging in a shooting war outside the Western Hemisphere?	91.5%	6.7%	1.8%
Are you in favor of the United States aiding the Communistic Russian government?	90.5%	7%	2.5%

The first thing to be said about this poll is that the questions were weighted. No normal person is in favor of war. The question of the moment is really whether or not one prefers war or a likely victory for the nazi armies. This is so obviously the real question of the day that the answers to the first question that was submitted to the clergy are being accepted *as though* they were answers to the question that is on everyone's mind today.

The second question is also weighted. It is one thing to be in favor of "aiding the Communistic Russian government" and another to be in favor of aiding the Russians in their battle against the aggressor nazi armies. No Catholic is in favor of aiding communism or a communist government as such. The replies to this prejudiced question are being treated as if the question had honestly been one of whether the priests were in favor of aiding Russia.

Both questions are also weighted by the use of the word "favor." One need not "favor" a type of action to know that it is necessary in a given instance. For example, no one is in favor of having his teeth pulled and yet there are times when a person decides that it must be done.

Because of the wording of the questions this poll has little meaning in any final, significant or objective sense. However, there are certain remarks about it that are worth considering and many questions that come to mind when one stops to think about it.

Only 38 percent of the priests replied. This means that 62 percent of the clergy are not represented in the poll. Is the opinion of the replying minority of the clergy a truly representative sample of the whole American clergy on these two questions? There is absolutely no way to determine whether the less than two out of every five priests who did mail back their questionnaires agree or disagree with the three out of every five who did not respond. The group who conducted the poll are entirely right when they say that a 38 percent response is a high percentage of returns in a questionnaire poll, but the fact that the response is relatively high had absolutely no reference to the question of whether the opinions of the priests who responded are representative of the opinions of all the clergy.

The responses of the clergy from one state to another vary greatly. Less than 30 percent of the clergy replied in Maine, New Hampshire, Delaware, West Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Montana and Arizona. In New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts more than 42 percent replied. The replies from New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, California, and Ohio account for a total of 7,174 of the 13,155 returns. This means that the opinions of a minority of the clergy in seven states make up more than half of the answers which are being interpreted to represent the almost unanimous opinion of the Catholic clergy.

One should note too that the opinions from the states that had a relatively high response differ considerably from the opinions in the states with a smaller proportion of clergy replying. For example, in Maine 80 percent of the 29 percent of the priests who replied voted "No" on the first question while in New Jersey 42 percent of the priests replied and 95 percent of the replies were votes of "No." This again points to the questions about how representative the poll is and how reliable the results are.

A release from the Gallup poll last week indicated that a majority of the United States citizens are behind the President's foreign policy. The poll of the Catholic clergy is being interpreted to show that 90 percent of Catholic priests are opposed to the President's foreign policy. Anti-Catholic groups will use these figures to give credence to their old story that Catholics are un-American and their new claim that the Catholic clergy is fascist and pro-nazi. Nazi propagandists will try to use the figures to persuade American Catholics that they must be against intervention and aid to Russia if they are loyal Catholics.

This poll seems to—but does not—show, by the use of a bad scientific method, that Catholic priests as a group are opposed to the policies which the government is pursuing and which a majority of citizens appear to support. In truth the greater number of Catholic priests in the United States may be or may not be opposed to our entering the war under any conditions and most of them may be or may not be against sending war supplies to Russia. The clergy poll does not give the answer.—R. B., *Contributing Editor.*

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Lost Italians

Who wander through the world alone, and yet are ever themselves.

By **Nicola Chiaromonte**

TOULOUSE is the capital of the French south west and the south west is the chosen land for Italian peasants coming from the great valley of the Po. In relation to France it is a southern region but, in climate and in the pattern of its culture, it is very like the north of Italy. Men coming from Cremona will think that Saint Sernin, the cathedral at Toulouse, looks like the cathedral in Cremona—except, of course, that their church of Cremona is finer. And so the south west had come to be not only a region for Italian immigration but also the center of exiled Italian socialism. It was in the south west that memory lived of the agricultural syndicates of Parma, of Reggio, of Molinella—achievements in civilization to which could be compared, alone in Europe, the municipality of Vienna. These men in exile had remained socialist, not as people remain believers in a religious faith, but simply as people remain honest men. Nothing could wipe out the memory of the days when the apostles, Prampolini, Massarenti, Baldini, were primarily the able administrators of prosperous cooperatives, the days when the ideal had become a tangible achievement and an evident reason for hope, when the normal work of each day was normally profitable, when there were agencies that would place a man looking for work, and organizations through which a man could buy and sell and obtain a loan. All that had been set fire to, destroyed and pillaged, but to no avail: a peasant never forgets those things that he knows he has built and paid for himself—with the same pertinacity and difficulty with which he has made his field and his house and paid for them. You can make an Italian forget or disown many a theoretical concept but you cannot make him forget one single good that he has seen with his eyes, touched with his hands.

And so it came about, at the time of the great disaster which befell France in June, 1940, that it was toward Toulouse that most of the Italians who had been living dispersed to the four corners of the country turned their steps. In Toulouse there were comrades, there were "compaesani" who would speak one's dialect, there were the friends of friends: a man would find a bed there, something to eat. They came from everywhere: from their homes, from the foreign regiments, from labor battalions and from concentration camps; from Lorraine and from Alsace as well as from the region of Paris, from Belgium, and even from England—via Dunkirk.

We all met there together in a dilapidated basement round a table and there was never enough room at the table nor enough chairs. Yet from out of the abyss of disaster it had been found possible to resurrect spaghetti. An eating room had been organized. The Secretary of the local Socialist Section had decided that this was far more economical and rational than it would be to give out subsidies: to feed men, that is a useful and simple act: but with money, when you hand it out, you can never tell where it goes, the money. And so those who had no money could eat without paying, and those who could pay, paid a little extra, and the Section's treasury made up the difference and made things balance. Furthermore, the basement, at night, could be used for those who had nowhere to sleep. On the most elementary basis possible—the necessity to eat—a little community had immediately grown into existence, or rather a sort of family had grouped itself together.

Of course, the Belgian refugees and the Poles had their group kitchens too. But it was not at all the same thing: they had big refectories for a hundred or a hundred and fifty people, while with us—apart from the fact that we would not have had the means to establish them—we had never even considered the possibility of the thing growing beyond the proportions of a large family. When occasionally it happened that we were thirty or so at table, there was chaos at once, ill temper, complaints and argument. About twenty was the ideal number: enough for company, enough to feel among friends, and not so many that one would feel, in spite of their numbers, and in their midst, alone. There was, too, a tremendous difference as regards organization between us and the men of the northern countries. Those people had a budget, and directors, and they ran things on a time table. With us it was a question of being able to improvise or rather to reimprovise everything, as each day came. Even at that time, months ago, the problem of getting food to live on was not any too simple in Toulouse —with six hundred thousand refugees in a city of

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two hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. The finding of money to purchase food in the market, the finding of something to burn in the stove, the finding of oil for cooking, those were problems which had to be solved anew every other day.

Catalonia and Dunkirk

But eventually what we had to find we found, and it was always thanks to a sort of favor of Providence, or thanks to some sort of sleight of hand—but above all it was due to the knowledge of an infinity of little roundabout ways of approach, due, in brief, to that fundamental experience which Italians possess, and by which they know that in the life they lead one never obtains anything by traveling the main and obvious road, but that the little which one can snatch from circumstance is attainable only by following the side roads and the hidden and secret and intertwining lanes. The French know how to find their way about, but it is not the same thing: they are too accustomed to thinking that, all in all, the things you want are delivered to you along the main highway of routine: their resourcefulness lies in finding the right trick at the right time, in ingeniously improvising some perfect little contrivance in a moment of need; but if the necessity to trick and contrive were ever to become a permanent condition and rule of life, that would be indeed exhausting and clearly would no longer be worthwhile. Italian resourcefulness is an instinct, sharpened and distilled, which discovers a track through the jungle of existence, and this path is at once a magical creation and a daily necessity. You understand what it is when you have lived in the land of the Arabs where whenever something or other has become difficult or impossible to find, people say to you: "If you want to find it go and see the Arabs"—just as they would tell you to go and consult the sorcerers. After the disaster which tore their country asunder to its deepest roots, it was extraordinary, and almost irritating, to see the French, surrounded by ruin and chaos, in the immense despair that filled all hearts, intense on one sole aim above all others: that of returning to daily normal life in order to reconstruct, no matter how, that mechanism of normality without which they cannot conceive that life can be possible. But for Italians—for the Italian people—normal life is at best no more than a habit, a hair breadth removed from disaster; and after disaster, as before, endures the necessity for intense resourcefulness.

As for the comrades of whom I speak, a normal life, well, there had been a long time since they had known anything of the sort. Foreigners without papers in France, volunteers in Spain, soldiers once again, in the French Army, or prisoners in French concentration camps—not to mention the years they had spent in Italian prisons—such had been, for almost all of them, the steps in their careers. And this life had left on their faces the imprint of a sort of excessive physical fatigue and of an excessive patience and enduring. Their state was not like that of their Spanish comrades: they had not their nervous despair and their sadness; in their eyes you did not see that look which men have who have seen "the heavens in which nothing shines," and which has remained in the eyes of so many of those who have come alive out of Europe's hells. They were very tired, and especially they were very disappointed; but, when all is said and done, they sought only to forget, if that were still possible.

There was one of them who had come from England. He had been at Dunkirk as a volunteer in a French foreign regiment. Planes, tanks, the Germans at three hundred yards, and cannon from the British vessels, broadside along the beach, shelling them. For three days no one had attempted to cook, and no one had wanted to eat. Ultimately the Italian decided that one could perfectly well make soup out of horse meat, and certainly there were enough dead horses. And he had lighted the stoves. Next day a burst of machine gun fire from a plane had torn the kitchen apart. This made little difference for it was time to go. It was the Italian, too, who managed to find a boat that had been left behind in a hut. At first there were only four of them wanting to leave for England in a rowboat, but when the others saw the four of them going off into the night the four counted themselves and found they were ten. After half an hour of navigation all of them were seasick and he was left alone to row. He had no idea in which direction lay England. A man in the bow, lying on his stomach with his head nearly in the water, kept repeating from time to time: "See that star? That's where you want to go." And he would point at the sky. In point of fact, they rowed for thirty hours and they reached England. They were so exhausted, sprawled on the ground, that women came to them and gently put bits of sugar in their mouths. They were taken to London and in London it was in a jail that they were housed—with all manner of politeness, but locked up just the same, all day, save for two hours of sunlight in the morning and two in the afternoon. After a week their French colonel had come to get them and take them back to France. They landed at Havre, and there were the Germans again, just about to arrive. In spite of that, they were set to work unloading planes from a ship and then loading them back on board again. Quite suddenly no more officers were to be seen. And so they built a raft with gasoline drums and for two days they made their way down the coast. Out of all this adventure there had remained in his mind a decided and dominant impression that people had made a complete fool out of him, for he had volunteered to fight fascism, and

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all they had done had been to leave him in the lurch on a road to nowhere.

Italian Odyssey

I am convinced that among the volunteers of the International Brigades in Spain, the Italians alone had the courage, between one battle and the next, to take unto themselves a woman and have children: so irresistible among them, in whatever country they may find themselves, is the instinct to take root and to establish a family. For instance, there was Tommasi, the cook at the mess, a workman from Treviso, a serious boy, so serious that he looked like a preacher, who had come from Spain accompanied by a wife and a child. The woman now was in hospital with a sickness of the eyes and he, although without any employment at all, without a penny in his pocket, still somehow managed to keep the child healthy and cleanly dressed. As for Carletti, the case was sadder still: he had had his wife and his child shot down beside him during the retreat of Catalonia. After that, in France, it had been the concentration camp: three thousand square yards, twelve hundred prisoners, iron discipline, for these people were "suspect." A policeman had said one day: "You will never get me to believe that anyone who gets out of here is still a man." During the war, in order precisely to get out of there, Carletti had asked to enlist in one of the militarized labor battalions which had been organized with a view to make these foreigners of some use, somewhere. They had been set to work building roads in the neighborhood of Dunkirk. Caught in the battle, each one had managed as best he could. For two whole weeks Carletti had stayed hidden in a shell hole, with an anti-tank girder above his head to shelter him from bits of steel that were coming at him from every direction. At night he would go out to look for something to eat. Happily there were trucks quite near him which the English had left behind: in them one could find an abundance of first rate provisions. Then the Germans had come and had set him, with the others, at work burying the corpses: they went to work digging pits and filling them with a layer of quicklime, a layer of corpses, quicklime and corpses, corpses and quicklime—for four days. In the end, proclaiming his status as a subject of the Axis powers, he had succeeded in getting his release with a pass to the non-occupied zone. But the Spaniards had been taken away to work in Germany. And that was another commodity found ready-made in France—those thousands of men without a country with whom one could do what one wanted in all tranquillity of mind.

Sometimes sitting in the café, it would happen that Carletti sought to explain to you what was deepest and innermost in his manner of looking at these things. On such occasions he would start reciting in a low voice the poems of Gori. Gori's poetry is not to be found in anthologies, he flourished at the turn of the century, he was the poet of Italian anarchism. Notably he wrote a long poem which is a sort of rhapsody of anarchy—in terza rima, like the "Divine Comedy." In that poem is sung the misery of the proletariat contrasted with the insolent opulence of the rich; the worker's pity for women whom the evil power of money has brought to fall; the sanguinary attempts of obscurantism to put out the Light—and the poem ends with a final vision of Humanity's painful advance toward ultimate Liberation. The whole thing is of a sentimentality so theatrical and so naive that it ends by being poignant. Two generations of Italian proletarians found their nourishment in that poem and its verses were passed on from mouth to mouth. Not that they entirely expressed what these men felt, but, more simply, that they found in them the essential element and character of their faith—which had much in common with the strong emotions men feel at some sudden turn in a play. The surprise element in their drama was the appearance on the horizon of these simple and uneducated men—unsatisfied and resigned—of Hope. And that could also be expressed as their poet expressed it, by the Ideal, written in the skies in great flaming letters. As for the language, it was that of melodrama, the only form with which they had some acquaintance. And then, too, there had been no one else to speak for them in more delicate terms. Gori was the poet of anarchy. But the "Worker's Hymn," written by honest Filippo Turati, the prophet of reformism, expresses in slightly more prosaic words and in slightly worse verse, exactly the same world of feeling—simple, clumsy and dressed for Sunday best.

Of such a nature was the ideal which, for twenty year and all across the world, Francesco Loprete had carried faithfully with him: from his native province of Apulia to Buenos Aires, from Buenos Aires back to the Puglie, and then forward into the trenches of the Carso, and from there into prison, and from prison into civilian life—just long enough to breathe once or twice—and then again to the prison cell and the wardens. That was an Italian Odyssey—complete. It was in Toulouse, as it happened, that I received a postcard from him: it came from the Vernet concentration camp and it said: "I hope that you are all right and that all our friends are all right too. I would like to tell you what it's like here—and some day I hope I will tell you. I am very hungry. All my best wishes to you and to our friends." And then there came another postcard, dated: "Campo di Concentramento di Polizia di Fabriano (Ancona) Italia." When the Italian Armistice Commission passed through Vernet, to ask those detained there whether they wanted to return to Italy, Loprete had opted for Italy, the more read-

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ily because they had promised the Italians that in Italy they would not be bothered by the police—a promise in which he probably had placed little trust, but still . . . it was concentration camp for concentration camp—it made little difference.

He had come to see me in Paris in the fall of 1938. He was just out of prison—eight months in France; six months in prison: that was because he had no papers. He had not been able to remain in Milan: they kept arresting him every two weeks for the very simple reason that, having once been convicted as "subversive," he could obtain no work. And since he was not working they arrested him for vagrancy: and if by any chance he found a way to earn a few lire selling fruit or flowers on the streets, he was arrested for violation of police regulations. And so one day he had started off on foot to Switzerland, with, in his pocket, a sample of the bread the Régime gives the population to eat, in Italy, a sample to show to the anti-fascists in Paris who would put something about it in their newspapers. And he did get to France, but only to get arrested no sooner than he set foot in Belfort. After serving his time, things had gone fairly well—from 1938 to 1939—he had even found some work and he began to feel once again at ease with the world. But when war is declared a foreigner without papers risks serious trouble. Someone advised him to go to the authorities and offer his services for the duration. And he had done so: but they arrested him and gave him six months in jail. Always for the same reason. When he came out, more than by anything else he was annoyed at the fact of having made the great mistake of offering to enlist. And this time as before, in his pocket he had brought away "evidence": a little fold of paper in which he had placed three worms, found in the prison bread. All this took place in February, 1940. At the beginning of May, he was offered work in the neighborhood of Versailles as a farm hand, for the French countryside lacked labor. All that he needed now were proper papers, but finally, when he had his contract signed and in order, it seemed certain that he would get them. He applied to the Prefecture at Versailles; they arrested him and sent him off to the concentration camp at Vernet.

All this seems like an entirely exceptional series of misfortunes. But it is exactly the kind of misfortunes provided for poor devils born in southern Italy: fate seems to have settled the pattern once for all.

And now I know, with certainty, that in the concentration camp at Fabriano, Francesco Loprete, obstinate as a stone, is waiting for all this to change. In other words he is awaiting the millennium. Only he would like to have friends write to him. For that would help him think—as he puts it.

Professor Harold Rugg

How an educator becomes an issue.

By **Ruth Byrns**

FIVE MILLION school children in America have studied the social science textbooks written by Professor Harold Rugg. More than two hundred thousand high school pupils buy *Scholastic,* a weekly magazine which has printed over one hundred articles by Mr. Rugg. Thousands of teachers and school administrators have listened to his lectures and have read his twenty-five studies which deal with various educational problems.

The opening of the 1941 school year means that again thousands of boys and girls from the third grade through the first year of high school are studying the books written by this Professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. The Rugg books—two for each grade—take the place of history, geography, civics, and economics textbooks and are the core of a fused "social studies" course in the schools where they are used.

Dr. Rugg's influence on our schools—on what is taught in them, why it is taught, and how it is taught—is so extensive that the people who support the schools he is influencing and the parents of the pupils who study his books should be concerned with understanding his basic convictions. Dr. Rugg realizes this himself and in his most recent book, a semi-doctrinaire, semi-autobiographical volume called "That Men May Understand," [1] he states his beliefs very directly and describes the way that he has reached the opinions he now holds.

The recurrent attacks on Dr. Rugg's work and

[1] That Men May Understand. By Harold Rugg. Doubleday Doran. $2.75.

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on his opinions also make familiarity with his ideas desirable. The Hearst newspapers, Mrs. Elizabeth Dilling's "The Red Network," the New York State Economic Council headed by M. K. Hart, and various other organized groups have repeatedly attacked him and his books as a "subversive" influence in our schools. Obviously no one is in a position to defend or attack ideas he does not understand.

Rugg fears

Dr. Rugg, in common with some millions of other Americans, believes "that our historic American way of life is in grave danger" and that today "democracy confronts a battle." In his recently published book he says that the problem of democracy is "to bring forth on this continent that civilization of economic abundance, democratic behavior, and integrity of expression which is now potentially available." He says that the real question about democracy is:

> Can Americans, scattered over a two-billion acre continent, operate a technically efficient and sustained-yield economy and at the same time preserve the democratic principle?

This is an important question, but Professor Rugg is surely wrong if he thinks it is the crucial question confronting the democratic countries today. The question of immediate importance is whether democracy can be preserved in a world where the domination of aggressive and efficient dictatorships is spreading. How can the "democratic" nations survive in the same world with Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia, and in surviving retain the essentials of democracy? Dr. Rugg does not give this question the attention it deserves. It is a difficult question. Answering it is much harder than furnishing an answer to the question he does ask—the question of distribution of goods.

But, because in his new book Dr. Rugg has not given an extensive discussion of the immediate danger to American democracy, his opinions and theories will not be criticized here in terms of the present crisis. His are long-time views and plans. These theories should not be judged in the face of conditions which demand almost instant decisions, conditions which developed in a non-Rugg democracy. The Rugg theories should be examined and criticized without reference to the great number of problems which have grown out of the present international situation.

The way to preserve democracy, Dr. Rugg believes, is by education and discussion. What sort of education? And what sort of discussion? Since the character of the discussion will be determined by the nature of the education, only the question about education is important.

Dr. Rugg's opinions about the sort of education which will save democracy may be found in many of his works and are presented again in "That Men May Understand." If the following quotes from his book are read carefully one can get a fairly adequate notion of his general ideas on the purpose and proper content of education:

> . . . the life and program of the school must be designed from the culture of the people, not from a classics-intrenched curriculum. Now is the time to build not a subject-centered school but a truly society-centered as well as a child-centered one. (p. xv.)
>
> . . . the very foundation of education must be the study of the actual problems and controversial issues of our people. (p. xv.)
>
> My thesis, I always explain, is that all of American life must be brought into the school—not merely the magnificent achievements and gains; those, yes, but the deficiencies and losses as well. I point out that most of those who attack Rugg books are people who, for one reason or another, do not want young people to understand all of American life as it is actually lived. (p. 16.)

The most serious fault that these Rugg theories have is that they won't work. The question is not one of "whitewashing" history but a matter of child psychology and common sense. There are many things about American life—rather about life—which children and adolescents cannot be taught because their experience is limited and their intellectual and emotional development is incomplete. Children do not respond to realities as adults respond; their values are not those of adults.

If, for example, grade school children study the life of a share-cropper family, they can learn to repeat what they have heard the teacher say or what they have read in a book or seen in a movie. It may be said, in a sense, that they have "learned" about this aspect of American life. However, in their free hours the children are more than likely to "play share-cropper" and show that they really think the life they have been studying about is exciting and romantic because it is strange. Poverty, crime, dirt, disease, cruelty, and injustice do not have the significance for the child that they have for the adult.

Life as it is

A young mother who wished to have her fourth grade daughter "see life as it is" recently took the child with her when she delivered a gift of clothing and food to a poor family. The woman they called on was grateful, talkative, and very specific in recounting her troubles. The child was plainly bored.

"Things weren't so bad for us before my husband was murdered," the woman finally explained. The mother looked quickly at the child hoping she was not too shocked. The child's face lighted up.

"Was your husband's throat slashed or was he stabbed or shot in the back?" the little girl asked with great interest and no sympathy.

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It is completely impossible to bring "all of American life . . . into the school." School life is not long enough and children are children.

A selection of subject matter must be made from the huge bulk of material that might be presented in schools. This selection should be made in terms of the aims and purposes that a school is supposed to meet. The aims and purposes of a school are derived from a concept of the nature and purpose of man and a knowledge of the capacities and abilities of children.

Rational animal

Man is a thinking animal. Professor Rugg believes this. One of the characteristics of man's rational nature is that he can generalize. From one experience he can obtain some knowledge of how to act in a new situation. He can remember and he can see relationships and grasp principles. It is not necessary (and of course it is entirely impossible) to train a child or an adolescent or a college student for every situation he will meet in his adult life. The business of the school is to give the student the training which will prepare him to act in a reasonable, ethical, and generally intelligent manner. The proper aim of education is to train men and women of character to think and to act in all circumstances in accordance with right reason.

Professor Rugg thinks that for students in American schools this training must come from the culture and problems of America. To maintain this implies that American children are unlike the school children of other countries. But this is not the case—the human race is one; all children in all nations need the same general education if they are to develop into intelligent, reasonable, just, and creative adults. No one can foresee the specific problems which the children of America or of England or of Germany or of Poland will face twenty years from now. The children of the world can best be trained to meet the problems and issues of the future (as well as those of the present) if they are first taught the tool subjects (reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic) and then given a general education. This general education should be very much the same in all countries although, naturally, illustrations, applications and methods of motivation will vary from place to place and from time to time. The basic problems of mankind are not limited to any one country or to any one period. Surely the study which Professor Rugg has carried on to write his social science books has convinced him of this fundamental truth.

Perhaps it needs to be made clear at this point that Professor Rugg's deep desire to preserve and extend democracy, his passion for social justice, his hope to abolish privilege on the one hand and poverty and need on the other, and his efforts to show up the errors of capitalism are ideals which most Americans share with him. And it must be said that those persons who have most violently attacked Professor Rugg are reactionaries who are chiefly concerned with preserving the worst aspects of capitalism. They care more for money, property and their own selfish interests than for human rights. Above all let it be clearly understood that one may disagree with Professor Rugg's educational theories without being in any sense in agreement with those who have misunderstood him or those who have attacked him for mean and selfish reasons. The issue here is whether Professor Rugg's sort of education is the proper type of education to guarantee the preservation of democracy, to bring more reason and justice into the decisions and actions of Americans, and to develop and foster a civilization in which it is possible for all human beings to live in a manner appropriate to their innate dignity and worth.

Professor Rugg's theories and the flaws in his theories can be better understood if one knows something of his own intellectual development. He went to Dartmouth College and says that he graduated from college "with no sure sense of personal values, no clear basis for making economic-political decisions." He did graduate work at the University of Illinois for four years and did five years of teaching and research at the University of Chicago. He says that he was "fairly innocent" of all the intellectual development taking place during these years. He complains, for example, that in 1918, although he had gone to college, got a doctor's degree, and had been a college teacher he knew nothing of Upton Sinclair, Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Isadora Duncan, Harriet Monroe, Louis Sullivan, and other creative minds of the period. In 1920 he came to New York City where he began to hear about such people. He began to read. He read Laski and Tawney, Turner's famous essay "Frontier," Veblen, and the other things which bright undergraduates were discussing in the 1920's. He became excited and decided that "Something must be done about this! Our youngsters must know these ideas." He decided that he was going to do what he could to help young Americans understand the development of their country. He remembered he had learned nothing of these exciting new ideas in school. He made up his mind to remake the curriculum so that young Americans could learn the things in school which he had had to learn as an adult.

Professor Rugg's mistake was to think that everything he failed to learn should have been taught to him in school. He did not recognize that school is only one of the many educating influences in this world. It is impossible to teach everything in school that young people should learn. Even if it were possible it would be absurd and unnecessary and quite utterly undesirable.

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Children should be taught in school those things which they need to know and which they are unlikely to learn at home, at church, from newspapers, magazines, and books, at movies, lectures, museums, or through other educating agencies and forces.

Proper complaint

Professor Rugg's complaint should be directed against the schools he himself attended and against his companions and colleagues rather than against a classical curriculum. Because many traditional schools are barren and sterile and failures as educational institutions does not mean that a good traditional school or a good classical education is sterile or barren. And one can always find—and should try to avoid—dull, narrow, unstimulating, unalert graduate students and college teachers with whom to associate. Professor Rugg's intellectual life began when he broke away from one circle of unstimulating colleagues and acquaintances and came to New York where new relationships opened up to him a contemporary thought and art which he had not known existed. A personal experience such as this does not justify an educational theory. As a matter of fact, Mr. Rugg's own theories would have done no good if they had been practiced on his companions who never discussed current theories, the literature, and art of 1900 to 1920. Yesterday's students who had to be taught in school to read Veblen, Louis Sullivan, Sinclair Lewis, or Harriet Monroe are the adults of today who have never heard of Heywood Broun, Frank Lloyd Wright, Hemingway, or Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Preserving democracy is one of the chief concerns of our times. Professor Rugg is right in stating that education is one of the foundations of democracy. The citizens of a democracy must be able to think for themselves. Education should train people to think straight, to think and act in a manner that befits their rational nature. The citizens of America must be able to think straight and to act wisely if our freedom is to be preserved. But that does not imply as Professor Rugg seems to think it does, that the basis of the curriculum of our school should be all of the issues of American life. Schools are concerned with teaching children how to think and how to act and not with teaching children how to solve specifically American problems through the study of these problems. The starting point in developing a course of study is to determine what content is best suited to training the intellectual powers of the students. Materials from the surrounding culture and from contemporary authors belong in the curriculum only when they are better suited to developing the pupils' intellectual abilities than are other materials. That a problem or an author is native or contemporary is irrelevant except in so far as a pupil's interest and understanding are quickened by a realization that here and now again an old problem, a long surviving issue, a time honored truth, or an enduring value is being reexamined or has come to have a new significance in the present.

This does not mean that the new, the modern, the immediate should be excluded from the curriculum on any level. It means that the contemporary, the American, the local aspects of knowledge or culture will not be the basis of the curriculum as Professor Rugg would have them. The good school, whether it is a kindergarten or a university, will never try to escape from the present. However, the business of the elementary school is to give children the tools of knowledge and the work of the higher school is to train students how to think straight; contemporary American culture has an integral place in the curriculum only in so far as it contributes to these ends.

The study of the basic human problems of all times and of the authors and thinkers who are always contemporary—the great books and documents written by the great thinkers—will give students a true perspective on the problems they themselves will face and will give them the sort of liberal education which is needed by all persons in all countries in all times if liberty and justice are to flourish.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

LAST SUNDAY, October 19, was Mission Sunday throughout the world for the Catholic Church. It may be taken for granted that by far the greater part of the multitudinous activities by means of which the Church works toward the end, the ideal, the supreme purpose of its being, on that day of commemoration and dedication, was concentrated in our own country. In France, Germany, Holland, Italy, England and Ireland, and Poland, in fact in all the countries from which the Church ordinarily derives the men and women and the funds necessary for the work of its universal mission, persecution of the Church plus the havoc of war, directly or indirectly, have made nearly all work for the missions impossible. In the United States, on the contrary, the unhampered energies of the richest, most naturally energetic, and naturally generous great body of some twenty million of Catholics, whose ancestors came from most of the countries now made desolate, were drawn together in our churches to participate in the activities of Mission Sunday.

From thousands of pulpits, over many radio stations, in a flood of writings in the Catholic press and the special circulars and booklets of our mission societies and institutions, the message of the day went forth. It seems to me,

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although, to be sure, I cannot claim to have read more than a tithe of the literature of the great occasion, that the booklet issued by the Maryknoll Fathers, written by Father John Considine, "Recipe to Make a World," the story of the meaning of the day, of the meaning of the Church itself, of the meaning of human life when directed by a divine purpose, was told with revealing clarity, and constructive, realistic idealism.

It supplies a most complete answer to the common criticism of Catholicism, of its clergy and its laity, a criticism often found on the lips of many Catholics, which accuses the Church, and, therefore, its official servants and its rank and file membership, of being inactive, aloof from the great affairs of human life, and its burning practical problems. But it does so without acrimony; it simply says, "the Catholic Church is not on the defensive; it has the most sublime, the most complete, the most beautiful answer to the needs of all men—the Christian way of life. It has a message for the world. It is carrying it to the world."

And in the pages that follow, in the brief space of sixteen small pamphlet pages, in very simple language, devoid of all rhetoric, but powerful through the distillation of great masses of actual experience into vivid little anecdotes and pictures of the world-wide mission field, more of the secret of the inner life which sustains the deathless organism of the Church is revealed than in many massive tomes of its theology, its history, its doctrine.

For it seems to be true that nowhere more than in mission work does the divine and the human purpose of Christianity, its supernatural end and its natural means, the reality of its soul and of its body, become so perfectly evident. In the apostolic, the teaching, purpose of the Church, all its other manifold purposes are fused and concentrated.

If, which, of course, is impossible, but if the Church should cease to send out missionaries, should cease to work toward what lies beyond and ahead of all present troubles and disasters, why then the end of the world would indeed have come; there would be nothing but a great void; chaos would swallow up mankind; the mad nightmare of the philosophical materialist would be realized. Nations may so pass; they are doing so today; great empires may thus dissolve, we are witnessing such events; and our own turn, as an organized state, based on our existing ideals, may also be passing away; probably, I think, it is; but the Church remains, it always has, it always must; and Father Considine quietly reminds us that the Church "has a recipe that will make a world," a new world, a finer, a better and a happier world.

But he also reminds us that it cannot be made overnight; that the happiness and the improvement we seek may reside, must reside, in the work itself, extended as it already has been for many centuries, and likely so to extend for twice as many centuries in the future before any general improvement has been gained. How all this may be so, and still inspire the most active work, and the most rewarding of consolations, you must turn to the booklet itself to be informed, and I strongly recommend that you do so.

Volunteer Pilots for Peter's Bark

TO the Editors: As I read Florence D. Cohalan's article in the September 12 issue of THE COMMONWEAL, I thought of the polemics among European Catholics before *"Rerum Novarum"* (1891). Opposed to the few who upheld Catholic intervention in the workers' question as a moral obligation, the majority answered that neither bishops (except for an occasional few) nor the Pope had spoken in that regard. But that minority of pioneers deserved well of the Church by paving the way for the reception of Leo XIII's word. The name of Gaspard DeCourtins of Switzerland, of Toniolo of Italy, of La Tour du Pin of France and many others, who were then criticized, today are remembered with gratitude.

For a complete picture, I would like to add that not a few of those who had upheld the negative argument of the Pope's silence, found, after the publication of *"Rerum Novarum,"* that the Social Catholics (also called Social Christians, or Christian Democrats) were too progressive, stepping outside the limits prescribed by the Pope. The *"Quadragesimo Anno"* ultimately justified the Social Catholics, who thus appeared in their rôle of forerunners, both in the field of theory and in that of practice, of Pius XI's action.

The faithful cooperate in a threefold manner with the authority of the Church: by preparing its intervention (if necessary); by carrying out its instructions; and by interpreting its thought. If they err, they are corrected in due time and place.

Another, more recent, example and that in the political field, has been that of the *Action Française*. As early as 1920 Belgian, French and Italian Catholics were alarmed at the positivist and pagan doctrines upheld by Charles Maurras and his followers, pointing out the harm done even in Catholic colleges and schools, while other Catholics, and in France even bishops, defended the movement. In 1924 Pius XI ordered a special inquiry to determine which side was right. He himself was said to be familiar with the *Action Française* and to feel that it was necessary to condemn it and place it on the index, forbidding Catholics to enroll in the leagues which it fostered, under threat of drastic disciplinary punishment such as the privation of the Sacraments.

I remember (because I was one of those who in 1923 wrote against nationalism in Maurice Vaussard's "Enquête")[1] that some objected that the Pope had not voiced his opinion. My answer then was the same as the one I express today in this letter. The faithful have the right and the duty to cooperate for the good of the Church and of society, without any pretension of becoming *pilots*. Let it be added that in 1939 the heads of *Action Française* made formal submission to Rome, and that Pius XII removed the prohibitions, maintaining, however, the condemnation of the principles. In this case, too, neither the

[1] Editions "Spes," Paris, 1924.

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Vatican nor the diocesan authority (Cardinal Verdier, Archbishop of Paris), took the initiative, but the faithful.

Indeed, what has Florence D. Cohalan done? He has tried to impress upon certain American Catholics the need for a different attitude towards the war, saying that with their behavior they were committing the Church. Whether this be true or not, he, too, has acted as a *pilot*. And even I, who am here neither to defend the former nor to criticize the latter, but to put forward some ideas on the matter, may be accused of being a *pilot*.

If this theory were right and widely held, what a paralysis of Catholic life! We would all be condemned to silence in expectation of a word from the Pope or from the episcopate of our respective countries. A weird situation would follow: were the Pope to address himself to a world reduced to silence, he would no longer find an echo; he would speak to a people who no longer had thoughts, sentiments, passions (in the natural and good meaning of the word) or activity; nothing!

Instead, the Church has given the faithful an active participation in its life, even in the preparation and maturation of the definition of its dogmas. It has been so from the first centuries to the present day. The dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and of the personal infallibility of the Pope were preceded by long discussions which lasted centuries. We remember Saint Thomas Aquinas among those who did not uphold the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in its integrity, and John Gerson among those who maintained that the Council was superior to the Pope.

Thus the Church lives on, with the participation of all under the guidance of their pastors, who at the proper time and place intervene to correct, redress, encourage and reunite. Let us all contribute our share without any pretension at being infallible, without discouragement if we err and are corrected, and with a spirit of rectitude in our search for truth and good.

There is another point in the above-mentioned article which moves me to make a few more observations.

War is a subject of natural law, not of ecclesiastical law, and falls within the jurisdiction of sovereign states, not within that of the Church. Its essence is of an ethical, not of a religious character. Those who are first entitled to determine the justice and necessity of a war are the civil authorities and the citizens (or *vice versa,* according to the constitution of each country). The citizens have the right and duty to participate in such an evaluation[2], which, though political, is and should be also moral, because there is no necessary war which is not just, and no just war which is not necessary.

I now ask: can the Catholic, in estimating the justice of a war, disregard its effect in the religious field, or fail to study which religious motives can suggest even a negative decision? His judgment is personal and can lead to a clash, just as occurred between Cohalan and his "volunteer pilots." But such is the fate even of judgments of pure natural morality and strictly political judgments in favor or against any war.

[2] See Luigi Sturzo, "Politics and Morality" (Chap. X), Burns, Oates & Washbourne, London, 1938.

What all the modern Popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII have done is to give value to the principles of natural law concerning peace and war, give them a Christian character of justice and love and a spiritual transcendence, be it for those who fight in the war with a Christian spirit, or for those who work for peace with a Christian spirit.

It is as clear as can be that America will not declare war to defend the Catholic Church or the Episcopal or Methodist, and that the Catholic Church (or the others) will not ask Roosevelt to declare war for their defense.

What is affirmed by many is that in this war Christian civilization is endangered, or better still, those values which Christian civilization has introduced to civilized living: respect for human personality, religious freedom, order and peaceful international living together, the independence of individual states, even the medium and small, and the participation of every country in economic goods. During the two years of the war, Pius XII has reaffirmed these values many times, either protesting against certain happenings (as in Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg) or proposing criteria for the future peace. It is a common belief that such values will be compromised or lost for a long time if nazism triumphs in the world. From this point of view American Catholics who uphold intervention do nothing more than apply the principle of international solidarity, which can be one of the motives for a just war.

But it seems to me that America's position is no longer that of a spectator who can side with one or the other of the contestants, finding good reasons for one or for the other situation or at least consoling herself with the idea that she is far from the fire.

The problem of saving civilization requires the answer to this question whether America, by staying out, can save her own civilization and personality. And having answered the first question, one can examine the second: "What sacrifice must America make to save also the civilization of Europe and of the other continents, including South America?"

I would like to add a word for the benefit of those who, in order to spurn the moral value of the war carried on by England and her allies, claim this to be an "imperialist" war on both sides.

Were this the case, England would not have given Hitler in 1938 the fortified bulwark of Czechoslovakia, nor would she have let herself be surprised in 1939 with only a few tanks, a few airplanes and an army of a few thousand men, while Hitler for six years had concentrated upon the creation of the necessary technical instruments for war, a war, moreover, novel in character and worldwide in extension. England and France could yield or fight. They chose to resist, with the greatest danger for their own survival. This is not imperialism on British (or French) part, but right to one's own life and civilization.

LUIGI STURZO.

New Brighton, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Controversy is an unpleasant thing even when it is kept above the level of personal abuse. It is a useless thing when no effort is made to

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keep to the point. The issue discussed in "Volunteer Pilots for Peter's Bark" is not whether Hitler can or should be beaten, but whether American Catholics as Catholics have a moral obligation to support the Allied cause and to urge American entry into a shooting war now. Its critics have chosen to ignore this point and have given much space to rejecting or assailing views I did not put forth. It would be interesting to see them try to meet the issue squarely and to have them explain just why American Catholics alone among the Catholics of the world are obliged in conscience to incite their government to a declaration of war. How is it that the Latin Americans who live, as we are told by the war party, in daily danger of being attacked by Germany seem to have no such obligation? There is a great difference between rallying to the defense of one's country when it is already at war and urging it to enter the war on religious ground.

I did not consider Catholics in their civil capacity because it is irrelevant to my theme. No one disputes their right to organize politically for any legitimate purpose. Unquestionably the Catholic members of the FFF have the same right to express their opinion that the nazi menace makes American war on it compulsory as the isolationists have to warn the bellicose of futility and disaster. But they have absolutely no right to assert that their views are binding in conscience on American Catholics. Such weighty obligations must be proclaimed by authoritative and responsible guides. As long as they remain in the field of practical politics, they may argue as they like and convince whom they can. When they venture into the field of moral obligation, they must produce credentials that will not at once invite comparison with the Tailors of Tooley Street.

It is obvious that the FFF is much more interested in the temporal outcome of the war than in the welfare of the Church. This is not surprising, but it is an excellent reason for not identifying their cause as ours. Mr. Agar himself proves this when asked if the FFF would have us fight all the active enemies of Christianity, or only those who menace Anglo-American political and economic interests. He replies that "we should fight those who menace our way of life and have the military strength to implement their threat." So the reason why there was no FFF to urge Americans to fight for religion in Mexico, Spain and Russia is that "our way of life" was not threatened by the persecutors of religion in those countries. Apparently it is menaced by the enemies of religion in Germany, so an appeal for war in defense of religion is issued, not by the Church, but by those who would not help her in other countries because only her existence was at stake there, not their political and economic interests. Yet according to Mr. Agar those who cannot accept that appeal are blind creatures, dupes and appeasers, who cannot or will not see what is going on in the world.

The argument that papal condemnation of "totalitarianism in general and nazism in particular" gives implicit authorization for the FFF appeal is simply pitiable. The Popes have certainly condemned totalitarianism in all its forms. They have also condemned liberal capitalism. The Holy See would welcome the fall of the German and Russian régimes, but it has not entrusted the task of overthrowing them to anyone. Can there be some practical reason of a political and economic nature that explains the otherwise puzzling fact that those who are most anxious to have the papal condemnations of nazism implemented by American arms are reluctant to face the Russian issue and have never been willing to give a tithe of their talents and resources to establishing the reforms the Popes have recommended to the liberal capitalist societies of the West? When one professes to interpret the present world-wide upheaval in the light of Christian principles, it is disingenuous to mention papal condemnations of one side as if they told the whole story and so afforded sufficient ground for a judgment on the crisis.

Those who are sincerely interested in learning the papal attitude to this war and the last one, and who therefore are not simply seeking a stick with which to beat their foes, will have no difficulty in finding it in the statements and actions of Benedict XV and Pius XII. The foresight and wisdom of Benedict XV have been amply vindicated by the development of events. He was the target for the reproaches of all the fanatics of his day and the base assaults on his character and motives that filled the press in those years are a shameful chapter in war propaganda. In his famous peace note of August 1, 1917, he declared that he had steadfastly attempted to do three things: to maintain perfect impartiality towards all belligerents; to do to all the greatest possible good without distinction of persons, nationality or religion; and to omit nothing in his power to hasten the end of the war and to bring Governments and people to more moderate counsels and to the serene deliberations of peace—a peace "just and lasting." It will be recalled that the then Monsignor Pacelli was chosen by Benedict XV for the immensely difficult post of Nuncio to Berlin, and that he was an active collaborator in the papal efforts for peace. As Pius XII, he has followed closely in the footsteps of Benedict XV, and has met a similar situation with the same policy. American Catholics will know how to judge between the serenity, wisdom and charity of the Holy See and the frenzied declamation of a political group of widely varying religious affiliations, whose sudden concern for the welfare and prestige of the Church should not deceive a child, much less a scientist.

Mr. Agar charges me with moral defeatism for saying that we are involved as Catholics in a disaster we cannot retrieve. Why is it moral defeatism? Those who look below the surface of events know that one of the great epochs in history is now being ended in blood and tears. The liberal capitalism of the nineteenth century, the Church's most formidable enemy in those years, is being devoured by the cancers it produced, and win, lose or draw, "our way of life" will never be the same again. The secularization of society at which liberalism aimed is being pushed further, with greater ruthlessness and efficiency, by the communists and nazis, and all the people, believers and non-believers, are involved in common ruin. There is no reason for a Christian to despair, no matter what he suffers, as ancient and recent errors inexorably reap their terrible and abundant harvest. He knows he was derided as an alarmist when he gave timely warning of the present

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disaster, and that he will be denounced as indifferent now for not suddenly becoming excited. He knows also that, while the Church has an inexhaustible vitality that would enable her to restore society there is as yet no sign that men will receive her message. Those who make most clamor about the present crisis are usually those who give least sign of the remorse that should follow recognition of their own share in producing it. The inference that failure to accept the interventionist viewpoint indicates unawareness of the crisis is inadmissable.

It may be doubted that facile optimism about either our present moral stature or the golden age that victory will initiate is really helpful to anyone. Mr. Agar doubts that we would be fighting for Anglo-American world hegemony; but Mr. Knox foresees at least a century of Anglo-American military and naval policing of the world after the task of crushing Berlin, Rome and Tokio has been performed. Mr. Knox knows more about the ultimate aims of the war than benevolent private groups, who are certain to be without influence when they are no longer useful. He concedes the possibility that other nations, if peacefully disposed, that is, if prepared to accept our overlordship, and if disarmed, may be allowed to associate themselves with London and Washington. All of this sounds familiar enough, but press dispatches with stories like it usually come from Berlin. In the encyclical *"Summi Pontificatus,"* issued after the outbreak of the war, Pope Pius XII expressly questions the validity of these promises of a new order and warns that unless they come from a spiritually renewed people, the post-war settlements will not produce peace. It may well be that powerful economic and political factors long in operation will push or pull America into the war. When the war is over, if the people of whom Mr. Agar writes are still wondering what has become of the Catholic Church they will find her where she has always been. We must hope that they will be more willing to hear her voice than they have been in the past, and that the noble impulses they manifest now are not inspired by present adversity alone. Her American children will need all their spiritual resources to meet the crisis America will have to face then. They will have a better chance to make their solution of national problems acceptable to their countrymen if they are able to say that though, through human weakness, they have much to answer for, they were not responsible for the war. They can say that truthfully if they follow their real guides, and resisting the temptation to serve two masters by clamoring for war while praying for peace, heed the words of the Pope: "Safety does not come to people from external means, from the sword which can impose conditions of peace but does not create peace. Forces that are to renew the face of the earth should proceed from within, from the spirit."

REV. FLORENCE D. COHALAN.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I sometimes wonder whether we in America realize how many Irishmen are fighting in the British forces at the present time and understand the reasons which motivate their act. The government of Ireland, for reasons of its own, prefers to remain neutral.

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But the Irish love freedom and they love their religion. Many of them are aware, in spite of governmental censorship, that both are being attacked. So, being Irish, they can do nothing but go to their defense.

The following article, "Irish Catholics in the Forces," by Father Martin Dempsey, Senior Chaplain to the British Forces, has come to me and I reproduce it here. It speaks for itself.

> From little towns and villages all over Ireland, from north and south, Dublin to Galway and Cork to Coleraine, Irishmen have come to Britain to fight Hitler. This time they have not only come because they love a scrap—they have come because they know that the freedom and the faith they love depend on them. And, as always, they have shown the mettle they are made of.
>
> There was at Dunkirk one middle aged Catholic chaplain of high rank. He could have chosen to be among the first to be evacuated to England. He did nothing of the sort—he remained there with his assistant, and both priests ministered to the dead, the dying and the wounded, of all denominations, during some seven days of hell and disaster. This chaplain from Meath did more, for he commandeered the basement of an abandoned house, foraged for food and fed the starving troops as they passed on their weary way to the shell-raked beaches.
>
> Another Irish chaplain was called out during a blitz to a tenement house inhabited by foreign waiters of all nationalities. It was pitch dark, bombs falling all round him. He was on leave from his army post and might have expected a few quiet nights. When he got to the house, the wardens advised him not to try the stairs, for the wall on one side of them had been destroyed and the staircase itself jutted out into the darkness. However, he insisted on going up, feeling his way along the wall, going from room to room, absolving and anointing until he had performed his priestly work.
>
> Another case was a chaplain who went from post to post almost under the guns of the German tanks, absolving his Catholic soldiers.
>
> In this war, Irish Catholics have died in Norway, in France, in Belgium, in Holland, in North Africa and Greece. They may not be one coherent force like the Irish regiments of the last war, for they are scattered throughout the army, but they are none the less equally proud of their tradition as good fighters and their heritage of Catholic Faith .
>
> In the annals of the Royal Navy, the world-wide exploit of Captain Fogarty Fegen, the Irish Catholic captain, can never be forgotten; his sacrifices to save the lives of others, the selfless patriotism of leader and crew, has written a page of unshadowed glory. The man-of-war, bruised, battered, on fire, outgunned and overmatched, yet fighting on to the very end, is as thrilling a story as was ever written on the grey waters of any ocean.
>
> It was Captain Irvine Andrews who held up the Germans in their victorious advance when from the roof of a small outhouse he played havoc with a Bren gun to such advantage that he won the Victoria Cross.
>
> In the battles of the air, it was an Irishman called Garland who first won the some coveted premier distinction, just as it was Patrick King from Liverpool who won the first George Medal.
>
> There is one last episode that will well bear repetition. One evening the Irish Guards hastily embarked on a Polish ship off the coast of Norway to sail down the coast and reinforce the Scots Guards, who were heavily under fire and hard pressed by the enemy. Convoyed by two destroyers they steamed slowly on their way near the land of perpetual daylight. At about half-past seven, the Irish chaplain summoned the men and recited the rosary with them, followed by a well-known hymn. Then, in a touching and wonderful way, the Polish crew of the ship took up the same air which they too knew and sang the Polish version of this prayer to God. A few hours later, there was a drone of airplanes and dive-bombers swept out of the sky, raking the vessel from stem to stern . There was a direct hit and the senior officers were wiped out almost to a man. The ship itself caught fire and the German birds of prey vanished again into the clouds while the guns of the destroyers barked angrily but in vain towards the drone which grew more distant every second. On board the ship, discipline was maintained, and courage was superb. The priest absolved the dead and the dying, baptizing one man so that in that moment of danger his soul entered into the Catholic Church. Eventually the survivors were brought back to the shore; some to re-embark, others, like Irish Catholic exiles before them, to lie far from the land of their fathers.
>
> They say that the world is a sepulchre for brave men; and the children of Ireland exemplify this statement. It has been remarked by Finley Peter Dunn that Ireland has no soil for its greatness. What matter is that, when the whole globe is her exiles' field of glory? Irishmen are second to none in courage; they are always ready for a row.
>
> As Catholics, they have learned that a price must be paid for the things of the spirit; and that price they are ready to pay. They know what Dean Swift—a compatriot—meant when he said: "If you're satisfied with the security, down with the dust!"
>
> Therefore, their bravery in this war is founded on the faith that such courage as is theirs will unlock the door to freedom; and freedom is nowhere more highly prized than in Ireland.

WILLIAM M. AGAR.

The Stage & Screen

As You Like It

THERE is no use trying to convert those modern souls who look upon Shakespearean comedy as an idiotic sort of entertainment suited only to those who had the misfortune to inhabit crude and unenlightened ages such as the Elizabethan or Victorian. These to whom romantic poetry is a relic of barbarism relegate "As You Like It" to the repertory of things fit only for high school boys and girls; they feel the fact that it has lasted more than three hundred years only another proof that wisdom did not arrive in the world until *circa* 1930. But those who are not of this kidney may well be grateful to Ben A. Boyar and Eugene S. Bryden for their admirable production. There are several ways, as is the case with every play of Shakespeare, in which "As You Like It" can be produced and played. It can be played in the vein of high romance or with the tongue in the cheek or with the emphasis on high spirits and, on the part of the clowns, on farce. This latter is Mr. Bryden's mood, and he carries it out admirably, with life and gusto, and in it he is excellently supported by his players. There is in his direction and the playing of his actors drive and variety and invention. Almost all the players are young, and

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this stands them in good stead. They are unshackled by tradition, and most of them give the comedy a vitality which is as unusual as it is refreshing.

First of course we must speak of Rosalind. Miss Helen Craig plays the part with high spirits, with charm and with distinction. Moreover in her more serious moments she plays it with deep and poignant feeling, a feeling which marks her as an actress who will in the future do even bigger things. Miss Craig proves again, as she proved last season in "Johnny Belinda" and the season before as Mary Magdalen in "Family Portrait," that she possesses one of the richest and most interesting personalities in the American theatre. She is admirably seconded by the Celia of Carol Stone, whose charm and bubbling sense of comedy ought to presage a bright future. The Jacques of Philip Bourneuf is modern in his quiet, amused cynicism, and given his conception he plays it to the hilt. His is one of the most intelligently composed Jacques I have ever seen. Leonard Elliott's Touchstone is graceful in movement and gesture, humorous and intellectual in spirit, and John Call as Silvius and Kenneth Tobey as Wililam are hilariously funny. Amusing too is the Phoebe of Paula Truman. I have never before seen it played as comedy unrestrained, but Miss Truman makes the conception most telling. As Audrey, Valentine Vernon gives a richly earthy performance, one informed with a fine gusto and vitality. Also she knows how to dance and sing. The Orlando of Alfred Drake is realistic rather than romantic, but he is forthright and likable. Good performances too are given by Arthur L. Sachs as Oliver, Ross Matthew as Adam and Peter Cusanelli as Charles. A word too must be said for the settings by Lemuel Ayres. They are original and atmospheric. In short this newest "As You Like It" is one which no lover of Shakespeare can afford to miss. *(At the Mansfield Theatre.)*

GRENVILLE VERNON.

Yankee Faust

"IT'S a story they tell in the border country, where Massachusetts joins Vermont and New Hampshire." So starts Stephen Vincent Benét's beautifully written short story "The Devil and Daniel Webster." And so starts William Dieterle's excellent cinema production based on this story. The film extols the virtues of the New Hampshire locale, but it could have happened anywhere in United States. This is not another movie about "Our Town," although at times *"All That Money Can Buy"* resembles that fine film. It is a parable about an unlucky farmer (when they're handing out hard luck, the farmer always gets there first) who in 1840 sells his soul to Mr. Scratch (the Devil disguised as a Yankee) for seven years of good luck, for wealth, for all that money can buy. So Farmer Stone prospers, becomes rich, mean, even worse than a loan shark, a devil's disciple. He is unfaithful to his good wife, and he builds a sumptuous house on his ill-gotten gains. But when Stone's time comes, he realizes that money isn't everything. He repents. And when the Devil returns for his due, Stone runs to the famous Daniel Webster. The case of the Devil *vs.* Jabez Stone, with Webster appearing for the defendant, is tried before a jury of the damned—traitors like Benedict Arnold, Simon Girty, Walter Butler, with Justice Hawthorne presiding. But Webster's oratory, his honest patriotism, his love for freedom including freedom of the soul, and his arguments for the right of every man to fight against his fate convince even this jury of blackguards who were, in spite of their sins, Americans all.

Hollywood could have gone completely haywire in making such an allegory, but Director Dieterle used Dan Totheroh's and Mr. Benét's script to best advantage. He mixed realism with the fantasy, but never allowed the combination to become heavy. Unfortunately the picture, which is too long and moves slowly at times, becomes somewhat obscure in the symbolism connected with Stone's new house and the girl the young farmer takes on as a mistress. But the film's good qualities far outshine its weaknesses. The sets and photography, including close-ups of New England types, the growing grain, farmhouse interiors, the harvest dance and the mad dance of death, set a new high in cinematic beauty. And the cast is superb. A restrained Edward Arnold acts the Webster rôle without resorting to phoney makeup. Walter Huston plays Mr. Scratch with convincing and coy deviltry. And Jane Darwell, Gene Lockhart and John Qualen make striking country types. James Craig, as the farmer, and Anne Shirley, as his plain, lovely wife, are believable

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throughout the fantastic tale. It is hardly Simone Simon's fault that the rôle of the other woman is confused and unnecessary. "All That Money Can Buy" speaks right out in its Americanism. While its popularity will be limited, it deserves large audiences for its successful presentation of an adult, intelligent theme. Yes, it could have happened anywhere; and please note in the finale, as Mr. Scratch is writing the next name in his book, he is looking very carefully at you.

Westerns come and westerns go, but occasionally one stands out from the others for its unconventional freshness. *"Texas"* is no super-western, but it has imagination and zip, and something different in the line of villains. Director George Marshall never succeeds in pulling together his rambling story, but he has staged individual scenes so well that your interest carries through. For instance, that prizefight near the picture's beginning, although rather long and heavy on the humorous side with its fisticuff postures like those in old sporting prints, has a rousing robustness that puts you in the mood for future events. All this happens in that confused period immediately after the Civil War when cattle roamed Texas and transportation was the foremost problem. Our bright young heroes, William Holden and Glenn Ford, get into the spirit of the times as Glenn joins the honest hardworking forces while Bill falls in with the crooked rustlers. Both, however, compete for husky voiced Claire Trevor. But it is middle aged, drawling Edgar Buchanan who steals the picture away from the handsome youngsters. As a sanctimonious reprobate, he practices dentistry as a front while he heads various gangs of bandits, cattle stealers, killers. His simple, unassuming performance as the twofaced old buzzard establishes a new standard in realistic villains.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of Week

Last Novel

Between the Acts. Virginia Woolf. Harcourt. $2.50.

"YES," Isa answered. "No," she added. Virginia Woolf's twin obsessions were time and communication. Ultimately these combined to destroy her. Time retrogressed horribly into the dark ages; communication disdained the heart and the pen for the bomb and bayonet. Crying: "They are destroying all the beautiful things!" the heartbroken poet embraced her shadow in the Ouse River.

"Between the Acts" was completely written before Mrs. Woolf's death; her husband believes she would not materially have altered it. Inevitably, we search within it for a key to its brilliant author's despair.

Like all Virginia Woolf's works, it is a tantalizing volume. What does it mean? One after another the characters repeat our own question as they view the pageant of England's history unrolled on the age-mellowed lawn of Pointz Hall. A reassuring answer emerges: "We are members one of another. Each is a part of the whole. . . . We act different parts but are the same." But suddenly (this is Summer, 1939) a flight of warplanes crosses the sky. That's the worst of playing out of doors; or can this be precisely what she means? The gramophone drones: "Dispersed are we . . ." "We all act. . . . But what play?" *Yes. . . . No. . . .*

Characteristically, the novel's entire action takes place within a single day. Is not every day a microcosm of all the days before and all the days to come? Is there not contained in each one of us, at this very moment, the entire past and future of civilization? Life: that alone is the rebuttal of Time's heart-rending urgency. *"Life, life, life. . . ."*

Virginia Woolf's career represents a continuous, strenuous, single-hearted effort to abstract "life" from the realistic trappings that engrossed the Georgian novelists. "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and circumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible?" Mrs. Woolf's early novels, "The Voyage Out" and "Night and Day," were, while uncommonly perceptive, still in the main tradition of the English-Continental novel, as refined by E. M. Forster. But already her short stories ("Monday and Tuesday") and subsequently the novels "Jacob's Room" and "Mrs. Dalloway" were striving to express the inexpressible by means of self-developed stylistic devices, including most notably the "stream of consciousness." Less and less did reality come to depend upon the merely factual; rather, the reader was dazzled by flashes, flickerings, sparkles from life's secret, inner core. "Orlando"—unpredictably a best-seller—marked Mrs. Woolf's furthest departure from temporal expediency: in his single person the protagonist spans virtually the entire range of modern English history, as well as both sexes.

Virginia Woolf's experiments rank beside Joyce's and Proust's in their influence upon contemporary fiction; the stream of consciousness has become a necessary item of the novelist's stock-in-trade; photographic naturalism increasingly loses ground. But like the Impressionist movement in painting, is there not a self-contained limitation, falsification to Mrs. Woolf's method? For the Impressionists' Light, read Life. The Impressionists, in concentrating more and more upon ephemeral light-effects, lost sight of the objects lighted; the forest is there, but what has become of the trees? Similarly, in Mrs. Woolf's novels Life tends to crowd out the living. The characters in "Between the Acts" are paper-doll types: the crotchety retired Colonial soldier; his vague, day-dreaming, back-glancing widowed sister; his handsome, thwarted stockbroker son; his poetry-quoting daughter-in-law; and their two random luncheon guests, the wayward Child of Nature and the ambiguously-sexed esthete. Nothing, really, happens to any of these; they don't develop; they simply occasionally vibrate. They are frank symbols: but an effective symbol must breathe corporeal air, must exist in our senses as well as in our minds; must challenge our memory. Mrs. Woolf's paralyzing limitation was a hyper-civilization, intensified by her membership in London's rarified Bloomsbury set. Civilization, perception, sensibility are not, certainly, necessarily faults in an artist: should not the highest aim of our culture be a super-perceptive intensification of sensibility such as Virginia Woolf attained?

But all at once, as we have seen, the magically-unifying poetry and music of the pageant (symbols of civilization

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in its highest function) give way to the sundering, lethal drone of the warplanes, and the even more lethal drone of county-English chatter. The audience, aghast, hides itself from the unfair, indecent reflection of itself in the pageant's impish mirrors: *Ourselves! Ourselves! But that's cruel. To snap us as we are. . . .*

To see her fellow-mortals as they are: cursed with a poet's conscience, Virginia Woolf lacked the final courage to bear this.

But her last novel—unwittingly?—is more hopeful than she: "If you think, and I think, perhaps some day . . . we shall think the same." And these are its last words:

"Then the curtain rose. They spoke."

DAVID BURNHAM.

BIOGRAPHY

Newspaper Days, 1899-1906. *H. L. Mencken. Knopf.* $3.00.

NEWSPAPER editors and reporters of today are missing a lot of fun. If they have any doubt of it, they should consult this latest book of Mr. Mencken, which tells with gusto the story of his early days in journalism in Baltimore. Newspapermen have gained much since those days in technique and salaries, but they have lost much too, for they have gone soft physically, and sometimes mentally.

The forty-hour week with regular hours and yearly vacations, the elaborate division of talent and the new efficiency of this age of communications, the Guild complaint committee to wrangle with the management over money matters and privileges, all these have reformed journalism, but in doing so they have squeezed almost all the glamor out of it. In the generation of which Mr. Mencken writes there were queer characters both inside and outside of newspaper offices, and they did queer things, but they were a vigorous, colorful lot, great eaters, lusty drinkers, hard workers, who lived life to the full.

These were the days before American editors became conscious of foreign news and before the New Deal made the social sciences page one news, when the sordid murder, the three-alarm fire, the scandals of the neighborhood made big headlines for the best newspapers. These were the days of keen competition in the coverage of police and City Hall news, when a reporter was not above a little faking to improve his story or to beat his rival. Reporters knew their cities then, knew all that was bad in them and much of what was good and consorted with incompetent politicians, prankish judges, impish cabbies, cops and bartenders. These were the lush days when few newspapermen felt the need for security or the urge for nidification.

Mr. Mencken writes his story with relish and the story he tells reveals for the first time how he got his vigorous and colorful style. James Gibbons Huneker once told the reviewer to go out and live and suffer if he wanted a style. Mr. Mencken has done all this, and more. In his preface he explains that this book of his experiences is true "but with occasional stretchers." Even granted these, there is still enough left of life and living to provide a whole city staff with literary style.

There is no space here to detail the contents of Mr. Mencken's book. It is a mine of interesting anecdote, both of Baltimore and of its newspapers. It will be read with delight from its first chapter, in which he tells how he won his first position on the Baltimore *Herald,* to the last two chapters, in which he tells the trials of the *Herald* in the Baltimore fire of 1906 and the newspaper's sale and demise.

This book is typically Menckenesque, which means that it is good. It will be treasured by the numerous Mencken fans. The professional writers among them should not overlook this sage advice from the master on alcohol as fuel for literary endeavor:

" . . . I never touch the stuff by daylight if I can help it, and I employ it of an evening, not to hooch up my faculties, but to let them down after work. Not in years have I written anything with so much as a glass of beer in my system. My compositions, I gather, sometimes seem boozy to the nobility and the gentry, but they are actually done as soberly as those of William Dean Howells."

NEIL MAC NEIL.

Middle East. H. V. Morton. Dodd, Mead. $3.00.

COMPILED primarily for the enjoyment of British Army men serving in Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Turkey and Greece, "Middle East" contains several descriptions of the Holy Land and Syria taken from the author's popular "In the Steps of the Master" and "In the Steps of Saint Paul"; but added to these are fresh and fascinating descriptions of Greece—of Olympia, Epidaurus, Delphi, Eleusis, Marathon and Sunium; and the stories of the Acropolis, the Battle of Marathon, the Delphic Oracle, are brought to our minds so tactfully that we almost believe that we remembered the details ourselves.

If we turn to "The Memoirs of Sir Ronald Storrs," to Gertrude Bell's "Letters" or Lawrence of Arabia's writings, we note the authors' preoccupation with ancient history and classical scenes in their moments of leisure during the last World War. And any British traveler in the Near East has the keenest interest in its sites, whether he has taken a First in Classics at his university, or had a relative wounded at Saloniki, or seen the Elgin Marbles at the British Museum, or merely heard the theory that the recipe for the sweets known as "bull's eyes" was brought to England from Turkey by the Crusaders. But "Middle East" is for us, also. True, Sir William Ramsay wrote more learnedly of Saint Paul and of the cities that he visited, and the Abbé Fouard and other scholars of places in Palestine associated with our Lord than Morton has ever attempted to do, but nobody has ever written with greater kindliness and tolerance and humor and sympathy of the present day inhabitants of these places than Morton has in "Middle East." The book is so full of information about quaint customs and successful means of thwarting organized tourist agents' discouraging routine that this reviewer's joy in reading was plainly lessened by the thought that had it been published some years ago, memorable journeyings might have been even more entrancing.

Now the swastika floats over the Acropolis, and the Greek children are starving. Sun-steeped Egypt is embattled. Iraq has come to mean "oil." And over the orange groves of Jaffa, and the purple plain of Esdraelon, and the vast wastes around Damascus and Baghdad and "Babylon Halt" giant bombers zoom. But these lands have known other days and wars, and somehow remained curiously mysterious, remote. Morton wrote of Siwa, "All the sounds are little sounds: the note of a bell on a goat's neck, the lazy song of a man working in one of the water gardens, the bright click of a donkey's hoof against a stone, and the padded sound of camels walking." Some day that will be true again. D. H. MOSELEY.

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The Inner Forum

ONE of the leading women's organizations in Argentina is the Federacion de Asociaciones Catolicas de Empleades. It was founded by Bishop Miguel de Andrea of Temnos some thirty years ago and incorporated in 1927. According to *Catholic Action*, "The main purpose of the organization is to promote and create better understanding between Capital and Labor." Basing its efforts on the social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI, the federation "attempts to solve social difficulties by giving help to the woman worker with regard to her physical and spiritual conditions, by providing her with health insurance, in case of illness, and by promoting social laws for her protection."

The Federation is made up from twenty-five vocational organizations. Some of them are groups of employees in such large concerns as Ademar, Etam, Gath y Caves, Harrods, etc. Others come from such enterprises as banks, child welfare work, municipal government, needlework, drug stores, state railroads, post and telegraph, etc. The presidents of each of the twenty-five vocational groups are members of a Superior Council which meets with its officers once each month. Following this general assembly each individual organization holds its own meeting. All officers of the Federation are laywomen except for Bishop de Andrea.

Eligible for membership are Catholic women between the ages of 16 and 50, and the present membership exceeds 50,000. Dues are one peso (23.65 cents at current rates of exchange) per month. After a year's membership each worker may participate in the organization's group life insurance. Otherwise she is eligible immediately on joining for all other benefits: medical care, price reductions at larger stores and for railroad fares, summer camps, employment bureau, use of the Federation's club house.

This center for Federation activities serves low-cost lunches for 250 to 300 women workers every day. It has an infirmary, a pharmacy, baths, a library. It shows good movies once a week at reduced prices. The building also houses a chapel where Mass is celebrated and weddings and christenings may take place.

Another building, the Academy of the Employees, is used for the 35 different lecture courses on religious, scientific, social and practical topics. The Federation also operates a school for girls who want secretarial training. It is building a recreation house in Mar de Plata. New legislation sponsored currently includes paid vacations, pensions and the regulation of labor at home.

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